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Brown, Rome Green

The meaning of socialism

Minneapolis

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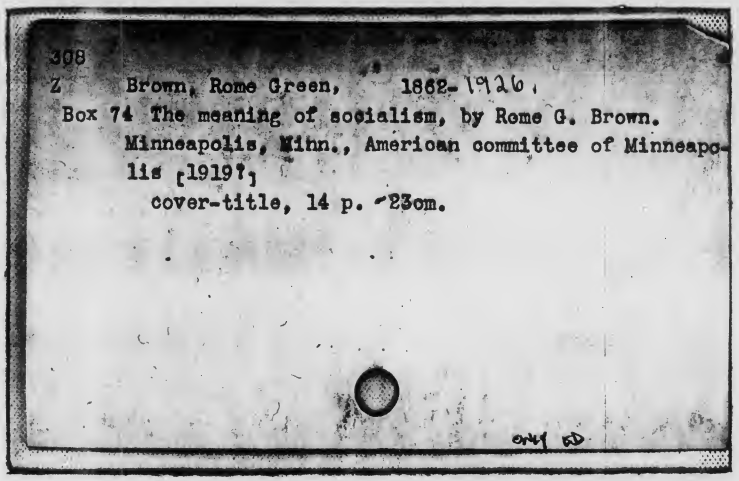
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The Meaning of Socialism

By ROME G. BROWN

The American Committee of Minneapolis
301 Metropolitan Bank Building
Minneapolis, Minn.

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April, 1920 - C.R.W.

The Meaning of Socialism

By ROME G. BROWN

It has been said that there are Socialists and there are Socialists. But let me tell you, there are just Socialists. Socialists are Socialists, and nothing else. Their consistency is their only merit. They practice just what they preach; and both their preachings and their practices are today in this country precisely what is taught in "The Communist Manifesto" of Marx and Engels of seventy years ago and in that bible of the Socialists, Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" of nearly three-quarters of a century ago. The Socialism of today is Marxian Socialism. Its primary object, as expressly avowed, is to overthrow existing governments, whether democratic or monarchial,—peacefully so far as discreet, but by organized violence when feasible. Next, all control is to be seized by the proletariat,—which means the present laboring, wage-earning class. This means a seizure of the State in all its functions, legislative, judicial and executive. And this political ascendancy of the proletariat is to be obtained peaceably only if that is "the easier and quicker way;" otherwise, by violence. Then the institution of private property, that is the right of private ownership in things tangible or intangible, is to be abolished,—by indirect and peaceful means as far as convenient, but by violence so far as conducive to speed and thoroughness of the change.

In the words of Marx himself:

> "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie, and to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, that is, of the proletariat organized as the ruling class." (1)

This does not mean merely government or public ownership of all means of production. It means

(1) "Communist Manifest" of 1848, by Marx and Engels.

exclusive ownership and operation by the State "of all instruments of production," that is of all property rights, including all industrial activities, manufacturing, commercial and agricultural. Moreover, by the term "State" is meant a State which is controlled exclusively by the wage-earning class and the governmental functions of which, legislative, judicial and executive, are in the exclusive control of the same proletariat. "The distinguishing feature of communism," says Marx, in his Manifesto, "is the abolition of bourgeois property." But his "bourgeiois" means private holding of property. His Socialism means the abolition of the right of private property, that is private ownership, in anything.

The Socialism of today is precisely the same as the Marxian Socialism of seventy years ago. The only difference is, that Marx was merely a revolutionary theorist, whereas today his disciples are organized militants, working out, right in your midst, right here in the United States, an actual revolution against our federal and state governments and against all the institutions which those governments were organized to safeguard, and particularly against the right of private property, which is the basis of every industrial enterprise, the source and safeguard of individual incentive, thrift and activity, and of their fruits. Socialism means the elimination of the individual and of every quality and characteristic which makes **the** man something different from simply **a** man.

One form of government is better than another in precisely that degree in which it insures its own efficiency and stability from internal disruption. It is efficient in the same degree that, at the same time, that it treats all men as equal, it gives to each man equal rights and opportunity for development and protects each and all in the fruits of individual effort and thrift. Our Government is based upon a theory the very opposite of that which is the basis of Socialism. The basic theory of our Government recognizes individual property rights and the right of contract, which rights are the basis of private industrial enterprises, and safeguards the maintenance of these rights by fundamental law controlling upon the law-making power of the States and of the Nation. (2)

The efficient protection of these and other inalienable individual rights was, more than anything else, the object and accomplishment of our Constitutional Government. For the purpose of safeguarding these rights various constitutional checks and limitations are expressly made. The people may, either directly or indirectly through their duly elected representatives, enact statutes. This is the legislative function. But before a statutory law is enforcible it must be able to pass the scrutiny of the courts, who measure it by the rule of the constitutional checks and limitations upon legislation and declare it valid or invalid. This is the judicial function. The executive function is to enforce all valid legislation. The preservation of these three co-ordinate functional departments of government, as provided in our Constitution, is necessary to retain that balance of governmental powers requisite to either efficiency or stability.

It was this establishment of effective protection, not merely theoretical protection, of the individual and of the minority against the arbitrary caprice and oppression of local or temporary majorities, that has made stability, efficiency, security of life, liberty and property of persons and of minorities, prosperity and enlightenment of its citizens, the characteristic features of the government of this, the greatest republic in the world's history. It is these scientific, practical and effective features of our system of government which have made it the model of all modern governmental reorganizations and have made our Constitution, and the government administered under it, the objects of admiration and even marvel of the masters of the science of government. Gladstone characterized our Constitution as expounded by Marshall, "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." Bryce, the greatest modern student and authority upon constitutional government, terms ours, as "the first true federal state founded on a complete and scientific basis."

This view of our plan of government was approved only the other day by the leaders of the govern-

(2) Coppage vs. Kansas, 236 U. S. 1, 17-18.

ments of the world when, at the Peace Conference at Paris, it was decided that the proposed League of Nations, a league to enforce the peace of the world, could safeguard the accomplishment of its purpose only upon a plan of government and control which followed the basic principles of our own Federal Constitution.

THE SOCIALIST ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR GOVERNMENT.

But Socialism in this country today teaches that our Declaration of Independence and our Federal Constitution are merely instruments deliberately concocted to perpetuate fraud, robbery and oppression. The government which has its basis upon those instruments is held up to derision as a government of fraud and of robbery, a government of injustice, a government of exploitation of the weaker for the benefit of the stronger, a government of oppression, a government wicked in its formation, wicked in its administration and wicked in all its promises for the future. Righteously and logically, according to orthodox Socialism as taught in this country today, our governments, state and federal, are only the deserving objects of enmity and destruction by every citizen within their jurisdiction.

The Socialist national platform in 1912 included the following items in its program of action:

The government ownership and management of all means of transportation and communication, and of all large-scale industries, including the immediate acquirement by the government, either municipal, state or federal, of all grain elevators, stock yards, storage warehouses and other distributing agencies; all land should be taken over by the state either directly or by confiscatory taxation; the adoption of the initiative, referendum and recall (including judicial recall); the fixing of minimum wage scales in all employments; the abolition of the United States Senate and of the veto power of the president, and allowing a repeal of national laws only by act of the Congress or by voters in a majority of the States; the abolition of all federal courts, except the Federal Supreme Court, and the election of all judges for short terms; the abolition of the power "usurped" (as they say) by the Supreme

Court of the United States to pass upon the constitutionality of legislative acts; and the revision (upon the Socialist basis) of the Constitution of the United States.

But these are only temporary measures of "relief" and are steps to a greater change. That is, they

> "are but a preparation of the workers to seize the whole powers of Government in order that they may thereby lay hold of the whole system of socialized industry and thus come to their rightful inheritance."

The platform of 1916 is practically the same.

The 1912 Socialist platform in Minnesota, after advocating similar temporary measures of "relief," states as the ultimate aim of Socialism:

> "The before-mentioned measures are presented by the Socialist party for the immediate relief of the workers, but its main efforts are directed to the complete overthrow of the present capitalist order and the establishment of an industrial system based upon the collective ownership and democratic management and control of the sources and machinery of wealth production."

The Socialist party of Minneapolis in its 1912 platform proposes specific changes and then asserts that these are only a step to an end:

> "We repeat that it must be distinctly understood that we advocate these remedial measures only as a means to advance the one great end of the Co-operative Commonwealth."

We have here, then, the advocacy today of Marxian Socialism,—a revolution in all industrial and governmental activities. Is this to be a revolution by peaceful change alone? No. The Socialist candidate for the presidency dismisses the subject of violent intentions on the part of the Socialists solely on the ground that violence would at the present time be inadvisable, because "the use of dynamite would turn the minds of people against them." When, however, conditions change so that it may become "advisable," he recognizes the idea of "bombs and bullets," and says that when the Socialists become the majority they will enforce their will, "even with bullets." (3)

When the Socialists shall get control of the Government they will confiscate to the State all private property, perhaps under a pretense of compensation which is only a gratuitous concession to the "robbers" who have acquired such properties. Such compensation even is not to be based upon any principle of right either in law or in morals. The nominal compensation suggested, for instance by Representative Berger in the National House of Representatives in connection with his measure for taking over by the Government of large business enterprises, seems to be more like the "reward" sometimes offered to thieves for the return of stolen goods "and no questions asked."

Benson says:

> "I believe that most Socialists twenty years ago, were in favor of confiscation. The trend now is all toward compensation. Not that Socialists have changed their minds at all about the equities of the matter. They have not. But they are coming to see that compensation is the easier and quicker way." (3)

THE SOCIALISTS AND OUR CONSTITUTION.

The Socialist propaganda publishes wide its view of our Constitution and shamelessly and treasonably derides that instrument and traduces the character of its makers. They were "grafters" and "crooks." This same Benson asserts that our Constitution was adroitly planned and put together and its adoption surreptitiously and deceitfully secured, for the very purpose of destroying the rights and liberties of the common people. He holds up to the utmost contempt that instrument for which respect and support are made the essence of the oath of American citizenship. He villifies the Constitution itself, defames its makers and the very motives of their work in its making and teaches disloyalty to it and to the Government the stability of which depends upon the enforcement of that Constitution as its fundamental law. He sneers at the idea of holding the Constitution in veneration and says that anyone who, knowing the principles and purposes that underly our Constitution, voluntarily accepts citizenship under it should be regarded "either as a fool or a fraud." (4)

(3) "The Truth About Socialism," by Allan Benson.
(4) Chapter 2, "Our Dishonest Constitution," by Allan L. Benson; also Benson in Pearson's Magazine, August, 1913.

This is from the chosen national representative of the Socialist movement in this country during the political campaign of 1916, of whom Eugene V. Debs, also once Socialist candidate for president, has said that "no one is better qualified to write a popular exposition of the Socialist philosophy and to make clear to the average reader the real meaning of Socialism."

The Declaration of Independence is reviled as a document written by American thieves to fool the workers with.

And not only a political revolution, but a social revolution as well, is contemplated. Our Government is founded on the institution of the family but orthodox Socialism classes monogamy as an ally of prostitution and inveighs against the family relation. (6)

Socialism is also atheistic. "We aim," says August Bebel, "in the domain of what is called today religion, at atheism." And one of the last Russian bolshevik declarations asserts that "the family and the church are the two great enemies of humanity."

THE DISLOYALTY OF SOCIALISM.

I need not remind you that, in this city on April 7, 1917, just after our war with Germany was declared, the Emergency Convention of the Socialist Party branded that declaration of war by our Government as a crime against the world and the war as the most unjustifiable war in all modern history, and pledged themselves

> "to continuous, active and public opposition to the war, through . . . . . all means within our power and to unyielding opposition to all military or industrial conscription . . . . . and any attempt to raise money for war expenses by taxing the necessaries of life or issuing bonds which will put the burden on future generations." (7)

(5) "Age of Reason," published at Dallas, Texas, in July, 1914.
(6) See "The Communist Manifest," by Marx and Engels; also "Outlooks from a New Standpoint," by E. Belfort Bax; also "Origin of the Family," by Frederick Engels; also "Woman and Socialism," by August Bebel.
(7) "The American Socialist and the War," with introduction by Morris Hillquit. This is one of the publications of an endowed Socialist Bureau, the Rand School of Social Science New York City. This school is a propagandist of Socialism, publishing and widely circulating throughout the United States publications of Socialist literature, including writings of Benson, Scott Nearing, and Prof. George D. Herron and others. This school is now helping to introduce Russian Bolshevism into this country by publication of speeches of Lenin, and others of the Russian bolshevists.

Morris Hillquit, the international secretary of the Socialist Party of America, and America's leading exponent of Socialism, commended the St. Louis platform in these words:

> "It will forever be to the credit of the Socialist Party of America that during the period of the acutest crisis in the life of international Socialism, it has not failed or wavered."

BOLSHEVISM.

Russia is not the originator, nor the sole demonstrator, of Bolshevism. The only difference between Socialism, or Bolshevism, in this country and that in Russia is, that in Russia the Socialist subfires have burst forth in violent eruption. Circumstances, there, have permitted a more ideal (from the Socialist viewpoint) working out of the principles of this revolutionary movement. There, progress was made in a few months up to and beyond the point reached here in many years. But Socialism here is travelling the same road (only with less rapid pace), as in Russia. The bourgeoisie, or property owning class, in Russia, constituted only about one-tenth of the population. The soviets, that is the proletariat of Russia, (using the Socialist terms) have seized upon the government and have taken the next step, according to the Marxian theory, by ousting the property owners of all property and by the taking over of all enterprises and industries into their control under state organization. However permanent it may be, their work in this line is now an accomplished fact that it has been completely and thoroughly done. And they are consistent, as Socialists are when they have the opportunity. They are not only eliminating the right of private property and private property itself, but they are completing the job by eliminating, by assassinations and executions under the guise of law, the former property owners themselves. Ignorant villains of the soviet class, drunk with sudden power, are signing death warrants by the thousands and these are issued upon mere rumor or hearsay. And these Russian Bolshevists are carrying into effect teachings, not merely those of 1848 by Karl Marx, but the teachings of today by Benson and other propagandists of Socialism in this country.

In his recent address to the Bolshevik revolutionists of Russia, Nikolai Lenin, the Premier of the Russian Soviet Republic, discusses, as the problems of the Soviet Government, the following questions:

> "What happens after a revolution has been fought and the workers have captured the powers of government? What follows the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'? What are the problems which the proletarian government must face, and how are these problems to be solved?"

The solution Lenin announces as follows:

> "This historical experience of all revolutions, the universal historical—economic and political—lesson was summed up by Marx in his brief, sharp, exact and vivid formula: **the dictatorship of the proletariat.** And that the Russian revolution has correctly approached this universal historical problem, has been proved by the victorious march of the Soviet organization among all the peoples and tongues of Russia. For the Soviet rule is nothing else than the organized form of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

He deprecates hesitation at unmerciful methods and the delay of deliberation, and closes his address with the following words:

> "We must clearly comprehend and firmly remember that Socialism cannot be built on such a social base. Only a class that marches along its roads without hesitation, that does not become dejected and does not despair on the most difficult and dangerous crossings, can lead the toiling and exploited masses. We do not need hysterical outbursts. **We need the regular march of the iron battalions of the proletariat."** (8)

There is a great lack of understanding, in this country today, as to who Lenin is and as to what Russian Bolshevism is. Lenin is too often assumed to represent a higher cult of Socialism and the difference between the terms "Bolshevism" and "Socialism" is taken to signify a marked distinction. The fact is, that the term Bolshevism signifies

(8) "The Soviets at Work——The International Position of the Russian Soviet Republic and the Fundamental Problems of the Socialist Revolution" by Nikolai Lenin, 3rd edition, published and distributed by mail throughout the United States by the Rand School of Social Science, New York.

nothing in itself. It is the Russian term to denote the party which is in power, and that happens at the present time to be Lenin and his cut-throat Socialist gang. You will note that Lenin himself uses the terms Bolshevism and Socialism as synonymous. So far as concerns Socialism generally and the movement in Russia which is now termed Bolshevism, you will notice that his Bolshevism is precisely the Socialism of Karl Marx. It is the Socialism taught by the Socialist party and by all Socialists in this country today. The only difference is, that the Russian Bolshevism of Lenin is orthodox Socialism working in an acute form in a body-politic long poisoned by predisposing conditions and now caught doubly sick and weakened by war and famine. The Bolshevists are the Socialist buzzards of Russia. (9)

Only recently the great commercial and industrial city of Seattle was the scene of an incipent revolution egged on by the Bolshevist agitators, some local, some fresh from Russia and striving to accomplish the avowed purpose of spreading a bolshevist upheaval in this country of the same kind as that under which Russia now suffers.

Mayor Hanson of Seattle in his statement regarding the riot, said that the rioters, incited by the success of the Russian revolutionists, had planned to start on the Pacific Coast an American Bolshevist revolution and that:

> "Gathered together in Seattle are Joe Ettor of Lawrence, Mass., fame; Mucky McDonald and men of his stripe from all over the Union. Gathered here are hundreds and thousands of Russian Bolsheviki who have arrived here during the past two years. These scoundrels want to take possession of our American government and try to duplicate the anarchy of Russia."

They issued their manifesto to organized labor

(9) Since this address was delivered, Clarence Darrow, an apostle of Socialism in America, has shown this identity between Socialism and Russian Bolshevism in his recent discussion of the subject in the Chicago Sunday Tribune of February 16, 1919, wherein he summarizes the position of Lenin revolutionists as follows: "They made it quite plain that they were not mere revolutionary reformers, but unterrified, resolute revolutionists. They had, they said, a great, a historic opportunity to establish Marxian social democracy in Russia. They had the right and the duty, they contended, to make the effort and to make it at any cost. They were prepared to resist opposition and to give it no quarter. He who was not with them was against them. They had to act quickly and decisively, they said, or else fritter away their chance and prove themselves weaklings and cowards. They established a dictatorship of the proletariat."

intended to incite labor to a revolution of violence and they said to labor:

> "Since the products and industries of the world are ours by rights; since through the proper organization we can manage both more efficiently and with justice to all, and we're ready, let's win."

This is Socialism pure and simple. Then, in line with the Russian phase of Socialism, they added.

> "Russia did it. Overthrow the present system as the Russians did their Government."

This was intended to transform an ordinary local industrial strike by unionism into a nation-wide political and social revolution, and to use organized labor for that purpose. Then unionism balked and lined up with Mayor Hanson and the public authorities in squelching the red radicals and thwarting their attempt at domination over unionism.

The Socialists are thoroughly organized throughout the country. They have their official headquarters in every State and in every large city, with their press bureaus, centers of Socialist propaganda, and their officially reorganized organs of the public press. All their activities are in the line of inciting, and of sympathy with, sedition, subversion of our state and federal governments, and the crippling of private industries. In Minneapolis, the principal city in the best fed state in the Union, the very center of the bread-basket of the world, was published a Socialist paper called "Hunger" which was only a bolshevist libel upon our great Northwest and upon the American people. When J. A. Bentall, the former Socialist candidate for Governor of Minnesota, was announced to start on his way to jail to serve a sentence for sedition, a "farewell meeting" was officially announced by the Minnesota Socialist organizations and the printed announcement said:

> "This will be the last public appearance of **Comrade Bentall,** before he has to go to Crow Wing county jail for 'sedition' on February 2. Admission free. Auspices, Socialist Party of Minnesota."

Congressman Martin Dies of Texas, summarized the menace of Socialism, when on the floor of the Congress, he said:

> "I would rather have anarchy than Socialism, because you recover from it more quickly. Anarchy is a good deal like a severe attack of pneumonia. The crisis may pass in two or three days. But Socialism is the galloping consumption of the nation, where you linger and languish and perish away."

There is no more active and wide-spread propaganda anywhere in the world than that of Socialism in this country. It is not a mere theoretical menace, it is here with you now. It has laid its hand upon the industries of one great State and in many ways, by subtle encroachments, is increasing its hold upon the industries of the Nation. Under Socialism industries are to be eliminated. Under Socialism that governmental control which today means the State is to be eliminated. See to it, therefore, first of all, that our industries and that our governments, state and federal, are safeguarded against this menace to their very existence.

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